

# **MOLENDINAR PARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

## **ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**Date of Review**                      **18th October 2011**  
**Date of Next Review:**              **October 2016**

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy document outlines Molendinar Park Housing Association's policy in relation to Estate Management.
- 1.2 Molendinar Park Housing Association recognises the importance of maintaining the physical condition, cleanliness and safety of the area both to preserve the fabric and to ensure that it is a place where people feel proud to live.
- 1.3 The Association accepts that it has a responsibility both to inspect and to maintain the area. Molendinar Park believes that it must work with tenants to encourage everyone to participate in this process. We will therefore take a fair but firm, approach in dealing with tenants who are found not to be accepting their responsibilities in relation to estate management.
- 1.4 This policy document covers the following:
  - Prevention
  - Regular checks
  - Responding to problems
- 1.5 It was agreed that the estate management policy should be read in conjunction with:
  - The Association's Tenancy Agreement
  - The policy on Neighbour Disputes and Anti Social Behaviour

## **General Aims and Objectives**

- 1.6 In relation to estate management the objectives of the Association will be:
  - To aim to allow all tenants and members of their household to live in well managed and maintained housing
  - To ensure that the common areas for which the Association has responsibility are regularly checked and maintained to the highest possible standard
  - To ensure that tenants are made aware of and accept their responsibilities in relation to the upkeep of their property and the surrounding area
  - To ensure that tenants are made aware of and accept the Association's responsibilities in relation to estate management
  - To react promptly and take appropriate action in relation to estate management problems – including complaints from tenants
  - To consider the employment of local contractors where appropriate
  - To work with other agencies and statutory bodies with the aim of ensuring that the area is well looked after.

## **Best Practice Guidance**

- 1.6 This policy document has been based on examples of best practice; in particular, the Chartered Institute of Housing's 2001 "Housing Management's Standards Manual", the SFHA's "Raising Standards in Housing" 1999 and SFHA/COSLA "Performance Standards" 2001.

## **2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS IN RELATION TO ESTATE MANAGEMENT**

- 2.1 In line with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Housing, Molendinar Park Housing Association will:

- Meets its statutory and contractual duties to tenants and other customers and will comply with relevant legislation and Codes of Practice
- Meet relevant Performance Standards
- Seek to ensure that tenants are able to live in a safe, decent, secure, clean and tidy environment
- Ensure that estate management services are planned, effectively budgeted and managed to the highest standard possible in line with the resources that are available.
- Maintain appropriate estate management records covering each house and common areas
- Liaise with other relevant organisations.

## **3. PREVENTION**

- 3.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association believes that prevention of estate management problems is one of the most effective ways of ensuring tenants can enjoy living in a well cared for environment. The Association will therefore seek to minimise estate management problems by:

- Making clear to tenants what their responsibilities and obligations are in relation to estate management
- Detailing landlord and tenant responsibilities in relation to estate management in the Association's tenancy agreement
  - at the tenancy signing-up interview
  - at the settling in visit with housing staff
  - in the tenants handbook
- Ensuring that contracts are agreed for the upkeep of open spaces
- Regularly inspecting the estate and taking prompt action where problems are found

## **4. REGULAR INSPECTIONS**

- 4.1 The Association will ensure that staff undertakes regular inspections of the exterior of the properties and of the common areas for which Molendinar Park has responsibility.
- 4.2 Every area will be checked regularly and a record kept of this inspection. This inspection is designated to highlight
- Repairs required to the outside of the property
  - Repairs required to common areas
  - Vandalism
  - Maintenance required to the property
  - Maintenance required to common areas
  - Action required by other agencies (eg refuse collection)
  - Cases of tenants failing to maintain their property/surrounding areas as detailed in their tenancy agreement

## **5. RESPONDING TO ESTATE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS**

- 5.1 Molendinar Park will ensure that prompt and appropriate action will be taken to deal with estate management problems arising either from regular staff inspections or from tenant complaints.
- 5.2 All tenants will be given information detailing how to make a complaint concerning estate management – whether it is about a tenant, a contractor or the Association.
- 5.3 All complaints will be recorded. Tenants will usually be asked to put complaints in writing, particularly where they are of a serious nature or where they are repeat complaints. Anonymous complaints may be dealt with at the discretion of the senior housing staff.
- 5.4 All complaints will be treated in a professional manner and appropriate action taken.
- 5.5 Where one tenant is complaining about another, the neighbours will usually be encouraged to resolve the problem themselves without the formal involvement of the Association.
- 5.6 Where this action does not resolve the problem, the Association will intervene by taking appropriate action:
- Informal visits
  - Formal visit or writing to a tenant or number to tenants to advise them of a problem and to outline a course of action

- Ordering a repair
- Recharging tenants for work that is a tenant's responsibility
- Liaising with other agencies

5.7 Where there is a persistent problem with a tenant/tenants failing to maintain areas for which they have a responsibility, Molendinar Park may encourage these tenants to transfer the obligation for upkeep to the Association in return for the levying of a service charge.

5.8 Molendinar Park Housing Association will avoid the use of legal action in relation to estate management as far as is possible but will be prepared to take such action where a tenant is in breach of their tenancy agreement and all other action has been tried and has failed to remedy the situation.

5.9 The decision to initiate legal action will be taken by a senior member of the Housing Management team. All legal action will be reported to the Management Committee and it will be this Committee that decides whether or not to proceed with any eviction order granted by the Court.

## **6. ABANDONMENT**

6.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association will make every effort to identify any properties that have been abandoned.

6.2 Where staff believes that a tenant has abandoned the property, appropriate steps will be taken to repossess the house. Any items in good condition found in the property will be stored for a maximum of six months where it is cost effective to do so.

## **7. LIASON WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

7.1 Molendinar Park is aware that some of the estate management problems which it is required to deal with will actually be the responsibility of other agencies (such as the Police, Environmental Health, Social Work, Cleansing, Street Lighting Etc)

7.2 Molendinar Park will seek to establish a good working relationship with each of these organisations recognising that effective inter-agency communication may, in itself, prevent or solve estate management problems.

7.3 The Association will ensure that staff is aware of the roles, responsibilities and obligations of these different agencies. This information will also be made available to tenants. Relevant agencies are likely to include:

- Police – in relation to vandalism, drugs misuse/dealing, illegal activities, violence, theft etc
- Environmental Health – in relation to dogs, excessive noise etc

- Cleansing Department Department – in relation to domestic rubbish
- Social Work Department – in relation to support for vulnerable households etc

## **8. OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE**

- 8.1 Molendinar Park will ensure that all open spaces (grassed and planted areas, play areas/equipment, common paths, fencing and railings) for which the Association has responsibility are adequately maintained.
- 8.2 Molendinar Park Housing Association will, where appropriate, consider the use of local contractors.
- 8.3 Molendinar Park Housing Association will ensure that open spaces are regularly checked to ensure that they are being well looked after.
- 8.4 Prompt and appropriate action will be taken in response to complaints about the maintenance of open spaces.

## **9. PETS**

- 9.1 Molendinar Park will provide details of tenants' responsibilities in relation to pets in the tenancy agreement. The tenancy agreement will stipulate that tenants require written permission for any pet. No reasonable requests will be refused.
- 9.2 In addition, tenants will be require to:
- Keep all pets under control
  - Ensure that their pets do not cause a nuisance or danger to others
  - Ensure that their pets do not cause damage to property
  - Ensure that their pets do not foul public places

## **10. DRUGS AND SOLVENTS MISUSE**

- 10.1 Molendinar Park will instruct legal proceedings to terminate a tenancy where a conviction has been obtained by the police arising from the tenant allowing the property to be used for the storage, distribution or manufacturing of drugs, solvents or other banned substances.
- 10.2.1 Molendinar Park will liaise and co-operate with relevant agencies involved in drugs work and will, where appropriate, refer tenants on to such agencies.

## **11. NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

11.1 Please refer to separate policy document on this subject.

## **12. VANDALISM**

12.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association will take firm action against tenants who are found to be responsible for vandalism (either directly or indirectly).

12.2 In relation to vandalism, either within houses or to any property/area owned by the Association, tenants will be responsible for their own actions, for those of other members of their household and for their visitors.

12.3 All cases of vandalism will be reported to the police.

12.4 Tenants will be charged for vandalism caused by themselves, other members of their household or their visitors.

12.5 Molendinar Park Housing Association will aim to develop a close working relationship with the local police, schools, local youth groups and any other relevant agencies.

12.6 Molendinar Park Housing Association will encourage all tenants to report vandalism to the Association as soon as it is discovered.

12.7 Where appropriate, Molendinar Park will ensure that a property that is likely to be empty for some time is made secure.

12.8 Graffiti that is racially abusive or in any other way offensive to a local resident will be dealt with as an emergency.

## **13. VOID MANAGEMENT**

13.1 Properties that are left empty not only result in a loss of rental income for the Association but they also attract vandalism, and may require additional maintenance/repair work. Empty houses can also make the area appear less attractive and may result in complaints from households seeking a move.

13.2 It is therefore very important that the Association deals effectively and efficiently with the management of void properties.

13.3 Please refer to separate policy document on void management.

## **14. REFUSE DISPOSAL AND LITTER**

- 14.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association will liaise with the Cleansing Department, where necessary, concerning the collection of rubbish.
- 14.2 The Association will ensure that guidance is given to tenants concerning rubbish disposal – including garden waste, bulky items and ordinary household waste.
- 14.3 Molendinar Park Housing Association will develop, in association with relevant agencies, clear procedures for the handling of discarded needles and syringes.

## **15. VERMIN AND PEST CONTROL**

- 15.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association will provide written information for tenants on:
- How to report such problems to the Association
  - Other agencies which may provide assistance
- 15.2 The Association will develop clear procedures for dealing with infestations of pests or vermin in Molendinar Park stock. These procedures will be developed in consultation with relevant agencies such as Environmental Health.
- 15.3 Molendinar Park Housing Association will respond to cases of vermin and pest infestation within Molendinar Park stock in a prompt and appropriate manner.
- 15.4 Where pests/vermin cannot reasonably be eradicated while the tenant is living in the flat the tenant will be temporarily rehoused until the necessary work is completed.

## **16. SATELLITE DISHES**

- 16.1 Molendinar Park will not permit individual dishes to be erected on its property. The Association will, however, facilitate the installation of communal dishes or cable systems.

## **17. SECURITY**

- 17.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association will take account of security issues in the design, management and maintenance of its property.
- 17.2 The Association will provide tenants with advice about home security and home contents insurance.

- 17.3 All final exit doors to building will be fitted with locks that comply with British Standards.
- 17.4 Consideration will be given to additional safety measures (such as window locks, safety letter boxes) for the homes of tenants who are victims of racial, sexual or other forms of harassment.
- 17.5 Molendinar Park Housing Association will liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that street and communal lighting is maintained in good working order.

## **18. OWNER OCCUPIER CHARGES**

- 18.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association will ensure that owners are charged for estate management services provided to common areas.
- 18.2 Owners will be notified as to the basis of these charges.
- 18.3 Reasonable steps will be taken to collect charges owing and to recover any arrears outstanding.
- 18.4 Please refer to separate policy on factoring.

## **19. STAFF AND COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 19.1 Molendinar will ensure that the Management Committee and staff responsibilities in relation to estate management are clearly defined and appropriate.
- 19.2 The Management Committee will accept overall responsibility of policy development and performance monitoring in relation to estate management.
- 19.3 Appropriate reports will be provided by staff on a regular basis to the local committee.
- 19.4 Committee members will not be given the names (or any other identifying information) of tenants involved in estate management problems.
- 19.5 Molendinar Park Housing Association will ensure that it has sufficient staff to provide the estate management service indicated. It will also ensure that all staff with estate management responsibility has the required training. This will particularly important in relation to the identification of repair or maintenance requirements.

## **20. CUSTOMER CARE AND INFORMATION**

### 20.1 Molendinar will:

- Make sure that the estate management services are accountable to tenants and both appropriate and respectful to local needs;
- Ensure that it has sufficient staff to provide an efficient and effective estate management service
- Provide new tenants with information and advice concerning estate management
- Ensure that the tenancy agreement is written in a clear and concise manner and that it covers responsibilities in relation to estate management
- Provide tenants with a handbook that provides information and advice on estate management.

## **21. STANDARDS, TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

### 21.1 The Association will meet the Scottish Housing Regulator /SFHA performance standards for estate management.

- Core indicators – total houses in management
- Non core indicators:

Home visits

Tenancies terminated

New tenancies commenced

Last update of tenants' handbook

Date of last tenants' handbook

Date of last tenants' satisfaction survey

### 21.2 Molendinar Park acknowledges the need to have:

- Legal, fair and effective policies for dealing with all estate management matters.
- Formal written procedures on estate management setting out procedures, which take account of the legal requirements and good practice guidance, for implementing the policies. (“The Scottish Housing Regulator/SFHA “performance Standards for Housing Associations”).

### 21.3 The Association will also collect and monitor information on estate management activities as appropriate.

## **22. POLICY REVIEW**

22.1 This Estate Management Policy will be reviewed by the Management Committee at least every five years.

22.2 The review will take account of:

- Legislative changes
- Changes +/-SFHA guidance
- The performance of the Association
- Changes in other relevant policies
- Feedback from our tenants

22.3 The Association will seek to involve tenants in the review of the policy and will undertake to inform all tenants of any significant policy or practice changes.